

# Three broods of piping plover chicks spotted foraging on the Point at Cape Henlopen

**LEWES** – Three broods of piping plover chicks are now foraging on the Point at Cape Henlopen State Park, two on the bayside and one inside the dunes, DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife announced today.

Two more piping plover pairs are incubating nests on the Point, with one of the nests due to hatch this week and the second in early July, Division of Fish & Wildlife Biologist Matthew Bailey said.

In other beachnesting bird news, a pair of American oystercatchers also is incubating a nest on the Point. In addition, the first least tern nest of the season was found at Gordons Pond, and, since terns are colonial nesters, the nest may be the beginning of a larger colony of least terns there, Bailey said.

For more information about beachnesting birds and monitoring efforts, please contact Matthew Bailey at 302-382-4151 or email [matthew.bailey@delaware.gov](mailto:matthew.bailey@delaware.gov).

## ***About the piping plover***

*The piping plover was listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1986, and the Division of Fish and Wildlife is responsible for its protection in Delaware. Under a binding agreement and species management plan that DNREC made in 1990 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – the federal agency with oversight of this ESA-protected species – piping plover nesting areas at Cape Henlopen State Park are closed annually to the public to protect the shorebirds from disturbance during their nesting season from March into September. The closure, which includes the Point and smaller areas around Gordons Pond and with both feeding habitat and nesting areas protected, has been successful, increasing the number of piping plover nesting pairs from a low of two pairs to a high of nine*

*pairs. Piping plovers feed on small invertebrates that inhabit the intertidal zone near their nesting territories. Chicks are not fed by their parents, but rather are led to the shoreline to forage while the adults keep watch for potential threats. Allowing pedestrian traffic in the intertidal zone adjoining nesting areas would disturb the vital link between nesting and foraging habitat, and risks adverse stress or mortality to the chicks.*

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